

Explosive Tylenol?

April 1, 2016



nurse asked for more information about explosive Tylenol™. I had not read that display in its entirety, so I took a trip downstairs to look at this exhibit. The photo shows explosives researcher, post-doc John Yeager, indeed examining a Tylenol crystal. Tylenol, the medication (also known as acetaminophen), has a crystalline structure similar to the structure of many crystalline high explosives, *but is not itself explosive*. Scientists at Los Alamos who study explosives can substitute Tylenol for safety reasons in some experiments. Thank you for bringing this to my attention, I had no idea.

On the other hand, Alfred Nobel (the inventor of dynamite) suffered from terrible headaches possibly brought about by his contact with nitroglycerine¹, and he died of heart disease². His nitroglycerine is the same nitroglycerine used as heart medicine today.

Gordon McDonough, Museum science evangelist

